



Chairperson's Message



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Space and power-constrained data centers, tight budgets, and increasing business requirements are driving IT organizations to consolidate, reduce costs, AND deliver an agile, highly available, and well-managed IT infrastructure. IT professionals face critical decisions on which technologies will be most effective in addressing all of these challenges, and then must determine what vendors, products, and solutions best meet their needs. Finally they must plan how to implement them as quickly and efficiently as possible, avoiding pitfalls wherever

possible.

Server virtualization and server blades are two of the hottest IT technologies today -- both are key building blocks for solving today's issues while also investing in the future. The blade market is currently approaching \$3 billion, and will rise to \$9 billion by 2008 (representing 29 percent of server units shipped), according to IDC. Meanwhile, the virtualization software market reached over \$800 million in 2006, up from \$560 million in 2005, and predicted to grow to more than \$1.8 billion in 2009. IDC predicts that virtualization activities will account for \$20 billion in worldwide customer spending on server hardware in 2010, up from \$11.9 billion in 2005.

Server virtualization projects are everywhere. Nearly 90% of 250 business technology professionals recently polled by Information Week Research said they have projects in progress or are planning them for the future, with 88% citing server consolidation as a key driving factor, followed by disaster recovery. In addition, virtualization is moving down to the desktop and even the application level. Implementing virtualization software on a blade hardware platform adds additional benefits in modularity, scalability, ease of deployment and provisioning, and reduced space, power, and cooling requirements per server.

After many end-user interviews and discussions while researching our just-released book, *"Blade Servers and Virtualization: Transforming Enterprise Computing While Cutting Costs"* one user of virtualization and blades, offered these reasons why blades and virtualization are "The Perfect Marriage." When asked where virtualization had presented the biggest benefits, he responded, "If possible, deploy (server virtualization) on blade servers...The configuration becomes so much more manageable and redundant, and that boosts efficiency even more. Why? Because blades not only take up half the space of traditional 1U servers, but they also share vital resources such as switches and interface cards, allowing for more simplified, centralized management."

As virtualization and blades continue to become mainstream, IT will need additional and improved management tools. Users want these tools to be easy to use, scalable, inexpensive, and simple to integrate with other software. Vendors and channel partners need to provide services such as ROI analysis, capacity planning, installation and training. Hardware and software vendors must form alliances that ensure that their products interoperate and can be well-managed together. Mergers and acquisitions will continue to play a major role in assembling unified management of both virtual and physical resources, as well as blade servers and other server options.

Data centers must also be ready to face challenges with both blades and virtualization. Crowding even more high-density servers into smaller spaces can lead to cooling and power distribution issues. Older centers may have to be retrofitted with extra equipment, and new centers need to have significantly greater capabilities. Virtualization may bring challenges such as virtual server sprawl, licensing issues, and combined management of both virtual and physical resources. Virtualization also introduces another operating system (the Virtual Monitor or hypervisor), as well as additional system complexity.

Even with these challenges, the future of blades and virtualization is bright. Please take this opportunity to gain new knowledge, insights, tips and tricks from vendors, channel partners, analysts, consultants, and other end-users through sessions, tutorials, roundtables, and networking opportunities. Learn about virtualization software solutions,

blade server hardware offerings, management tools and issues, networking and storage considerations, and interconnect options. Learn how to virtualize servers, desktops, applications, storage and I/O.

In addition to keynotes from IBM, Microsoft, VMware, Countrywide Financial, and IMEX Research, you will hear from both major companies and organizations and emerging innovators, including AMD, APC, Avocent, Broadcom, Brocade, ClearCube, Cisco, Citrix, DMTF, Eaton, Egenera, Emulex, Emerson Network Power, Ethernet Alliance, FalconStor, Hitachi, Intel, LSI Logic, QLogic, Robert Frances Group, Sun Microsystems, Symantec, SWSOft, Taneja Group, Tehuti Networks, TechTarget, The 451 Group, Verari, Virtual Iron, XenSource, and many others. And don't forget to check out the new ROI Planning Lab to see where these technologies can save you the most money.

If you want to be successful implementing, selling, or developing blade solutions or virtualization software offerings, don't miss this year's Server Blade Summit on Blades and Virtualization: The Perfect Marriage. See you there!

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Barb Goldworm is president of Focus Consulting, a research, analyst and consulting firm focused on systems, software, and storage. Barb has spent thirty years in the computer industry, in various technical, marketing, sales, senior management, and industry analyst positions with IBM, Novell, StorageTek, Enterprise Management Associates, and successful startups. A frequent speaker at industry events, Barb previously also created and chaired the Storage Segment of Networld+Interop, and has been one of the top three ranked speakers at Storage Networking World. She is a regular columnist and speaker for TechTarget SearchServerVirtualization, and has also written regularly for ComputerWorld, Storage Networking World Online, and NetworkWorld. Barb has just released her book *Blades Servers and Virtualization: Transforming Enterprise Computing While Cutting Costs* published by Wiley (available here at the Barnes and Noble booth and also online).